

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached replacement drawing sheets makes changes to FIGs. 3, 8 and 9 and replaces the original sheets with FIGs. 3, 8 and 9. The changes correct the lead lines for reference symbols 30R and 32L in FIG. 3, and add the legend --RELATED ART-- to FIGs. 8 and 9.

Attachment: 3 Replacement Sheets

REMARKS

Claims 1-14 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 5, 12, FIGs. 3, 8 and 9, and the specification are amended to correct minor informalities. No new matter is added. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims at least in light of the following remarks.

Withdrawal of the objection to the drawings and specification is respectfully requested in view of the amendments set forth above.

Claims 2-5 and 9-12 are rejected under 35 USC § 112, first paragraph. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

First, it is well settled that the claims as originally filed form part of the original disclosure. Therefore, claims 2-5 and 9-12 in effect provide their own supporting disclosure, in addition to being supported by the specification in, for example, the paragraph bridging pages 11 and 12, and the second paragraph on page 12.

Second, it is not inconsistent for one side of a surface of a prism to be a transmittable surface, while the opposite side of the surface is reflective. While the claims are not limited in this respect, such structures are known.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 2-5 and 9-12 under 35 USC § 112, first paragraph, is respectfully requested.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 5 and 12 under 35 USC § 112, 2nd paragraph is respectfully requested in view of the amendments set forth above.

Claims 1 and 6 are rejected under 35 USC § 102(e) as being anticipated by Miyake et al. (US 7,030,926) ("Miyake"). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Miyake does not support the rejection for at least the reason that Miyake fails to disclose "an optical unit disposed in front of the image pickup unit and configured to guide incident light from a plurality of directions in the visual field to the image pickup unit; and a

supporting unit for supporting the optical unit, wherein the supporting unit comprises a tapered supporting member having a thickness gradually reduced toward the image pickup unit," as recited in independent claim 1.

The Office Action alleges that element 6 of Miyake corresponds to the claimed optical unit, and that element 1 of Miyake (a "lens mount") corresponds to the claimed support member. However, element 6 (a "prism mirror") only receives light from a single direction, via image forming lens 202. See Miyake at col. 6, lines 35-37: "an image forming lens 202 for picking up an image in a horizontal direction to image pick-up device 3 via prism mirror 6" Therefore, the lens mount 1 of Miyake is not a support member for an optical unit where the optical unit is "configured to guide incident light from a plurality of directions in the visual field to the image pickup unit," as recited in claim 1.

Consequently, claim 1 is allowable over Miyake. Moreover, claim 6 is likewise allowable over Miyake for at least the reason that claim 6 depends on claim 1, as well as for the additional features it recites. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 and 6 as anticipated by Miyake is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 8-10, 12 and 13 are rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakata (US 6,166,764) in view of Miyake. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Sakata and Miyake do not support the rejection for at least the reason that they fail to disclose or suggest "an optical unit disposed in front of the image pickup unit and configured to guide incident light from a plurality of directions in the visual field to the image pickup unit; and a supporting unit for supporting the optical unit, wherein the supporting unit comprises a tapered supporting member having a thickness gradually reduced toward the image pickup unit," as recited in independent claims 1 and 8.

The Office Action correctly recognizes that Sakata does not disclose or suggest the feature. Moreover, Miyake does not remedy the deficiencies in Sakata for at least the reasons discussed above. More specifically, the lens mount 1 of Miyake is not a support member for an optical unit where the optical unit is "configured to guide incident light from a plurality of directions in the visual field to the image pickup unit," as recited in claims 1 and 8.

Accordingly, claims 1 and 8 are allowable over Sakata and Miyake. Moreover, claims 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12 and 13 are likewise allowable over Sakata and Miyake for at least the reason that they depend on one of claims 1 or 8. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-3, 5, 6, 8-10, 12 and 13 as being unpatentable over Sakata and Miyake is therefore respectfully requested.

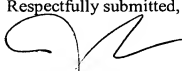
Claims 4, 7, 11 and 14 are rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakata in view of Miyake and further in view of Applicant's allegedly admitted prior art. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Claims 4, 7, 11 and 14 depend on one of claims 1 or 8. Claims 1 and 8 are allowable over Sakata and Miyake for at least reasons discussed above, and the applicant's allegedly admitted prior art relates to a different claim feature than that discussed above. Accordingly, claims 1 and 8 are allowable over Sakata and Miyake, and the applicant's allegedly admitted prior art. Therefore, claims 4, 7, 11 and 14 are likewise allowable over Sakata, Miyake, and the applicant's allegedly admitted prior art for at least the reason that they depend on one of claims 1 or 8, as well as for the additional features they recite. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 4, 7, 11 and 14 as being unpatentable over Sakata in view of Miyake and further in view of applicant's allegedly admitted prior art is therefore respectfully requested.

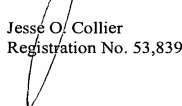
In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JAO:JOC/ccs

Attachment:
Replacement Drawing Sheets (3)

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